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*“Resume:
a written
exaggeration of
only the good
things a person
has done in the
past, as well as a
wish list of the
qualities a
person would like
to have.”*

- Bo Bennett



HOW TO FORMAT YOUR RESUME FOR INTERNET JOB SEARCHING



*By Michele Dumas
(Published in Distinctive Career
Services, LLC., on August 13,
2007)*

Email resumes ... Web resumes ... HTML resumes ...
Scannable resumes ... Keyword resumes ... Text re-
sumes ... ASCII resumes ... PDF resumes ... Word re-
sumes ... Traditional resumes ...

A resume is a resume, right? But then, what are all these different types of resumes you keep hearing about? If you are confused and not quite sure what is being referred to when you hear all these different names for resumes, you are certainly not alone!

Over the past decade, the most common resume-related questions asked by job hunters have progressively shifted. While still of major importance, the majority of queries are no longer about functional versus chronological resume styles, whether to keep or remove experience from twenty-five years ago, or whether to include dates of education. With the advent and subsequent explosive increase in the use of the Internet during the job search, questions have turned overwhelmingly to issues of electronic resume creation and transmission.

- What are the different types of electronic resumes?
- What are the differences between an e-mail resume, a scannable resume, and a web resume?
- How do I know which resume format to use?

- How do I format my electronic resume to ensure that the recipient can read it?

No wonder there is so much confusion! In just a few short years, there has been a complete revolution in the tools and techniques of job hunting. As applicant tracking technologies have come into common use among headhunter firms, large corporations, and even mid-size and small businesses, recommended resume formats and methods of transmission have rapidly evolved with the advancing technologies. Further complicating things have been the increasing availability of personal web space for online resume portfolios and biographies. What does this mean for today's job hunter? While the Internet has opened unprecedented doors of opportunity in the job search process, for those who have not taken the time to learn and apply the rules it can mean disaster!

While few job hunters have time to spend months studying the most recent technologies and recommendations for the creation of electronic resumes, before venturing onto the Internet with your resume it is critical that you take the time to learn and understand a few simple concepts. Knowing your audience and the formats most acceptable by those audiences are essential pieces of knowledge for the Internet job hunter.

The human reader — The traditional, printed, hard copy resume (yes, it does still have a primary place in job hunting!) is created to attract the human eye and attention. With the advantages of word processing applications, sophisticated formatting is possible and should be applied strategically to create eye-appeal

and draw the readers' attention to key qualifications.

The computer reader — The electronic or computer-optimized resume is designed, first and foremost, to be readable by the computer. There are several types of electronic resumes, but the common element of all is the ability to be searched by keyword. Of course, once your resume has been tagged as matching a keyword search, it will be reviewed by a human. So compelling, easy-to-read content is just as important in the electronic resume as in the traditional resume.

There are fundamental formatting differences between traditional and electronic resumes. If you do not understand these differences, your resume will make it into very few - if any - resume databases.

"If you call failures experiments, you can put them in your resume and claim them as achievements."



- Mason Cooley

RESUME FORMATS

What are the differences between keyword, scannable, web, traditional, and text resumes?

Traditional resumes are designed, as already noted, to compel the human reader, through persuasive language and design, to take further action and call you for an interview. Layout and page design are critical and should be planned strate-

gically to draw the eye to areas of emphasis. The most effective traditional resumes are focused on achievements and written in powerful, active language that captures and holds the attention of the reader.

Scannable resumes -- also a printed, hardcopy format -- are designed primarily for accurate scanning into a computer. Captured as an image, scannable resumes are fed through OCR (optical character recognition) software that reads and extracts the text. The extracted text is databased for storage and later recalled by keyword from an applicant tracking system. Scannable resumes are very rarely requested any more. If you are asked for a scannable resume, the most efficient option is to email the requestor your plain ASCII text resume (described next).

Text resumes (also referred to as ASCII resumes) are just what the name implies, an ASCII-formatted version of either your traditional or scannable resume. Text resumes are universally readable on all computer systems and platforms and are the preferred format when you are emailing your resume. An ASCII resume received in email can be entered directly into an applicant tracking system without the added step of needing to scan it. Entry into the system is fast, easy, and accurate and many employers and recruiters prefer this format.



Still confused? My recommendation is to simply maintain two separate versions of your resume:

Recommended Version #1: Traditional Resume - If you wish to send a hardcopy, paper version of your resume you should send your traditional resume. Traditional resumes are most often stored on your computer as a computer file and printed on an as-needed basis. For example, you will want to print at least several copies of your resume to carry with you and hand out at interviews. You may also be asked to send your traditional resume via email to a recruiter or employer. In these cases, you should have your traditional resume saved in the two most commonly asked for file formats: MS Word and Adobe PDF. You can then attach the requested file or files to an email message and send it to the requestor to be printed on the receiving end.

RECRUITER TIPS

1. Be Honest

“Don’t give your recruiter answers you think they may want to hear. There isn’t really any ‘right’ answer. We’re most interested in getting to know you.”

- Tracy Montoya, VP,
Segment Recruitment,
Walt Disney

2. Shut Up

“People relate these intensely personal stories. It’s fantastically inappropriate for a business setting. Use your judgment when you’re relaying things from your past.”

- John Campagnino,
Global Director of
Recruitment,
Accenture

3. Don’t Brag

“Share your achievements and qualifications with confidence, but not arrogance.”

- Marie Artim,
Assistant VP for
Recruiting, Enterprise
Rent-a-Car



By far, you'll find that the most requested format for your traditional resume is MS Word. If you comply with the request, be aware that your formatting may be incompatible with the recipient's system. While usually still readable, fonts and bullet sizes and styles may be different from what you intended. These problems can be minimized, although not always eliminated, by embedding the fonts into the document. This is a simple process, and the MS Word help files will guide you through it. You should also take care, while writing and designing your resume, to use design elements that are default and standard on most systems. For example, it is not wise to use a fancy, custom font on your resume that you know will be emailed. Default fonts such as Garamond, Helvetica, Book Antigua, or Verdana are better choices.

To eliminate issues with compatibility, if the recipient has the free Adobe Reader installed, Adobe PDF is the best format in which to send your traditional resume. The PDF version of your resume will appear on the recipient's system precisely the way it appeared on your system. For this reason, if given the choice of sending an MS Word file and Adobe PDF file, always opt for Adobe PDF. However, many recruiters and employers still prefer the MS Word file format, because this is the format they are most familiar with.



Recommended Version #2: ASCII Text Resume - If you conduct any portion of your job search on the Internet, ASCII-formatted resumes are critically important tools. Always have an up-to-date ASCII text version of your resume on your computer. This is the fastest way to contact potential employers and to apply for jobs advertised online. You must also have a text version of your resume if you wish to post in online resume databanks.

As previously noted, employers rarely request scannable resumes anymore. If they utilize an applicant tracking system, they will likely request that your resume be e-mailed, either as ASCII text or as an attachment. E-mail allows the recipient to enter your resume directly into the database, eliminating the extra steps of scanning and OCR.

How do you use these file formats and transit them to recipients via email? My recommendation is to actually attach the MS Word or Adobe PDF file to the email in its native file format. Then,

RECRUITER TIPS

(Continued)

4. Skills Matter

“Never assume your experience is not relevant to the business world. For example, highlight how during your summer job waiting tables helped you develop customer-service skills.”

*- Jenna Washbourne,
Director of Staffing,
Prudential*

5. Sit Still

“Arrive 10 minutes early for the interview. Dress appropriately. Don't chew gum, fidget, or slouch during the interview.”

*- Odesa Stapleton,
Director of Talent
Management,
Verizon*



ALSO copy and paste the text of your ASCII text resume into the body of your email (where you would normally type a message), along with a letter of introduction or other note explaining why you are sending the resume.

A final type of electronic resume is the web resume, also known as the online resume. Created using HTML, your web resume may be uploaded to space provided by a web-hosting provider. Eliminating the compatibility problems associated with word-processed resumes sent as e-mail attachments, web resumes offer the advantage of maintaining layout and design on the systems of anyone with a web browser. Available for viewing around the clock, conveying a technology-savvy image, and allowing the ability to add supporting content to your resume (effectively creating an online portfolio promoting your qualifications), web resumes are becoming a progressively important tool in the job search. The creation of a web resume or resume portfolio is far beyond the scope of this article, but if web resumes are an electronic format that interest you, be aware that many service providers have begun offering web resume design and hosting at affordable prices.



“Writing isn't hard.
It isn't any harder
than ditch-digging.”

~ Patrick Dennis

PREPARING INTERNET RESUMES

What do I need to know about writing keyword resumes?

Remember - it is absolutely essential that you create resume content that is keyword rich regardless of the file format. It is not necessary that you maintain a separate keyword version of your resume. ALL resumes must include a heavy emphasis on keywords. Keywords are generally defined as nouns or phrases that an employer will use when searching for an applicant with your skill set. To maximize the recall of your resume in a search, you will want to use as many keywords in your resume as possible.

1. Keywords should focus on technical and professional areas of expertise, industry-related jargon, and your work history. Also, include the names of associations and organizations of which you are a member.

2. Whenever possible, use synonyms of keywords in different parts of your resume and if you use initials for a term in one section, spell the term out in another.

3. Always be specific. For example, while it may be fine to include the phrase "computer literate," you will also want to list the specific software that you are proficient in using.

This is one of the most common areas of confusion, so I'll state it once again...the content of a keyword resume does not need to differ from the content of your traditional resume. With careful attention to rhythm and flow, it is possible to prepare a resume that is keyword optimized, but that also includes the powerful, compelling, active language of a traditional resume. Not only will this simplify your resume preparation, but it will ensure that the content of all versions of your resume

will be optimized for both the computer and the human reader. Furthermore, if you incorporate a professional summary and bulleted list of qualifications in the text of your resume, there is little if any need to prepare a separate keyword summary.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to recommend a specific list of the best keywords to use in your resume, as the "best" keywords are different for every individual and depend mainly on your unique career objective and background. What is certain, however, is that a well-prepared keyword resume is critical to your success in a job market that largely relies on electronic applicant tracking systems. If you have any doubts at all you should consult with a professional resume writer.

"Not only is your story worth telling,
but it can be told in words so
painstakingly eloquent
that it becomes a song."

- Gloria Naylor



How do I prepare an ASCII text version of my resume?

Preparing the all-important ASCII text version of your resume is not difficult, but it does require a learning curve. Once converted to ASCII format, you will be able to email your resume in response to an ad or paste it directly into web-based forms and submit it to Internet resume databanks. The specific directions will vary depending on the software you have installed on your computer. But, in general, to prepare your ASCII resumes properly, follow these simple steps:

1. Using your word processing program,

open your word-processed resume and use the "Save As" function to save a copy as a "Text Only" or "ASCII (DOS)" document. Title your document with an easily distinguishable name; perhaps "resume_internet.txt"

2. Close your word processing program and re-open the ASCII file. You will not be able to see your changes until you have done this. Note that it has been stripped of virtually all original formatting.

3. Go through your new ASCII document line-by-line. Align all text flush to the left-hand margin.

4. Remove all "centering," "right hand margin," and "justification" alignments.

5. Although you should no longer see them, if visible, remove all graphics, artwork, and special character formatting.

6. Remove all tab characters.

7. Remove all columns.

8. Replace bullets with a simple ASCII asterisk (*).

9. Carefully check the spelling and the accuracy of your data.

10. If you wish, use ASCII characters to enhance the appearance of your resume. Asterisks, plus signs, or other keyboard characters can be used to create visual lines that separate sections of your resume and make it easier to read.

The above steps convert your resume to ASCII without line breaks. When pasted into a web-based form or email message, your resume will automatically wrap to the size of the window.

Your new ASCII resume will be universally

readable, no matter what computer system the recipient uses. It will also be easy to manipulate for entry into applicant tracking databases, eliminating the inherent difficulties of scanning and converting your paper resume with OCR systems.

FINAL WORDS

There is no denying that the Internet has caused what was once a straightforward process to become complex and confusing to many job hunters. Yet, the benefits far outweigh the negatives. Like never before, as a job seeker you have immediate access to announcements and advertisements of openings around the globe. You have the ability to conduct detailed research on companies of interest. And you have unprecedented opportunity to cost effectively promote your qualifications to hundreds or even thousands of hiring authorities at just a tiny fraction of the cost of doing so through traditional methods. While the new skills you must learn may seem daunting at first, by understanding the concepts and creating your electronic resumes, you are well on your way to an efficient, effective Internet job search.

Do you want to use this article in Your ezine or website? You are welcome to as long as you use the following text with it: Nationally certified resume writer, career marketing expert, and personal branding strategist, Michelle Dumas is the founder and executive director of Distinctive Career Services LLC. Through Distinctive Documents www.distinctiveweb.com and her Executive VIP Services delivered through <http://www.100kcareermarketing.com> Michelle has empowered thousands of executives, professionals, and managers all across the U.S. and worldwide with all the tools and resources necessary to conduct a fast, effective job search. Michelle is also the author of the popular e-book 101 Before-and-After Resume Examples found at <http://www.before-and-after-resumes.com> and of Secrets of a Successful Job Search: 7 Simple Steps to Land the Job You Want in Half the Time found at <http://www.distinctiveweb.com/jobsearchsecrets.html> To learn more about her job search products, resume writing services, and career marketing programs, and to sign up for many other free resources, visit her websites. Copyright 2007. All rights reserved.

EDITOR'S NOTES

NETWORKING REQUIRED



In his article, "If You Want To Find A Position, Start Networking Now" (Market Watch, July 20, 2005), Marshall Loeb reminds us that many jobs are not posted on the internet or published in the newspaper. He, like your very own Career Transition Center, stresses the importance of networking which he calls "a vital tool for gathering information, talking to the right people and achieving your goal."

Here are Loeb's tips to get the most out of your networking:

1. "Know what you're looking for.
2. Be assertive.
3. Curb the desperation and start listening.
4. Know your most valuable tools (resumes and business cards).

5. Stick with it.

To read the entire article, go to www.marketwatch.com.



“Good writing is clear thinking made visible.”

~ Bill Wheeler

EXECUTIVE BIOS

Several participants have asked about executive bios recently, so here is some general information on the subject.

The executive bio is a one-page overview. The document is written in the third person and consists of a series of paragraphs outlining work experience and successes, the latter in only general terms.

Whereas a résumé's goal is to generate interest for the purpose of producing interviews, the executive bio is designed to give readers a general understanding of an executive's experience, capability and successes.

It doesn't try to achieve dramatic effect through the use of accomplishments, and it skips powerful past-tense verbs preceded by bullets. It also omits contact information as well as bold, italicized, and underlined type, which are used to enhance a résumé's eye appeal or to emphasize certain points.

Although many of you had to create a bio when bidding on senior level positions at State, executive bios are ineffective for generating interviews with search firms and prospective employers. ***They work best as networking tools***; to help consultants provide summaries of their cre-

dentials when trying to gain new accounts; or provide background about an executive to go with a press release, in a corporate brochure or Web site, or for a speaking engagement.

Check out your alumni associations. They are a great networking tool. Many Alumni Associations offer access to job listings, networking opportunities, and career services. The Association is your doorway to more thousands of talented, influential, and diverse alumni living and working domestic and overseas environments. It is a great resource and one that you should check out.

“Boxing was the only career where I wouldn't have to start out at the bottom, I had a good resume.”

- Sugar Ray Leonard



MESSAGE FROM NEW EDITOR

We are all sad to see Amy Pitts transition from CTC. She greatly expanded and developed the program during her four, years here. I hope to continue the outstanding customer service she provided and to share information on jobs and all things related to career management and transition. I welcome your input. What would you like to read about? Please share with me your experience with the job search—interviewing, networking, new adventures that I can pass along to your colleagues. Send me an email or call.

“A human being is nothing but a story with a skin around it.”

- Fred Allen



“The difference between
the right word and
the almost right word
is the difference between
lightning and
the lightning bug.”

- Mark Twain

ATTENTION JSP GRADS!

OCTOBER JOB FAIR

Our next job fair will be held on Tuesday, October 23, from 1:00 to 4:00 pm in the gymnasium of Building D (aka the Field House) at FSI in Arlington, Virginia. Be sure to bring a photo ID and, if you have one, your Retiree ID. A few employers will leave early. Try to arrive before 3:00 pm.

OCTOBER FOLLOW-UP MEETINGS

All JSP graduates of the October 2007 and previous classes are invited to attend two follow-up meetings in Room E-2118 to discuss progress on the job search, share experiences and advice, and enjoy each other's company. The dates are:

- Tuesday, November 6, 10:00 am - 12:00 noon
- Tuesday, November 20, 10:00 am – 12:00 noon

ALUMNI UPDATE

James Stephenson, a Foreign Service Officer who retired from USAID in 2005 (and a JSP Grad!!), has written a new

book to be published in November:

RECONSTRUCTING IRAQ, A VIEW
FROM THE INSIDE
Potomac Books, Inc., 2007

The foreword to the book was written by Richard L. Armitage. It has been selected for the “Diplomats and Diplomacy Book Series” of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training and Diplomatic and Consular Officers, Retired.

According to the publisher, Potomac Books, Inc., RECONSTRUCTING IRAQ “is the “first book by a senior career official in the Iraq Reconstruction Program.” Here follow other excerpts from the publisher's press release:

“In emergency medicine, ‘the golden hour’ is the first hour after injury during which treatment greatly increases survivability. In post-conflict transition terminology, it is the first year after hostilities end. Without steadily improving conditions then, popular support declines and chances for economic, political, and social transformation begin to evaporate. James Stephenson believes we have lost Iraq's golden hour.

“A veteran of post-conflict reconstruction on three continents, he ran the Iraq mission of the Agency for International Development in 2004–2005 with more than a thousand employees and expatriate contractors.

“Losing the Golden Hour tells of hubris, incompetence, courage, fear, and duty. It is about foreign assistance professionals trying to overcome the mistakes of an ill-conceived occupation and help Iraqis create a nation after decades of despair. Neither criticizing nor defending U.S.

foreign policy, Stephenson offers an informed assessment of Iraq's future."

James, better known as Spike, worked for USAID for 28 years, specializing in rebuilding states at war or recovering from a war. He served in Egypt, Grenada, and El Salvador. He was the USAID Mission Director in Lebanon and in Serbia and Montenegro before becoming the USAID Mission Director in Iraq from 2004 to 2005.

"A decorated Vietnam War veteran, Stephenson is a recognized expert on post-conflict transition, civilian-military cooperation, and counterinsurgency. Currently he is a senior adviser for security and development at Creative Associates International, Inc. He lives near Charlottesville, Virginia.

Congratulations, Spike!



"When trying to communicate a specific message don't tell a story just to tell a story; tell a story to forward your message. Having this clear mental picture before you begin is critical to your overall success as a storyteller."

- Kevin Eikenberry



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<http://www.state.gov/m/fsi/tc/c6958.htm>